



## Seattle Office for Civil Rights

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### Sexual Harassment Is More Common Than You May Think

A survey of over 9,000 federal employees by the Merit Systems Protection Board found that:

- 42% of the women who responded had received unwanted sexual attention
- 12 % of the men who responded had received unwanted sexual attention

Anderson-Davis, in training 80,000 management and non-supervisory personnel in over 170 organizations, concluded that:

- 90% of all sexual harassment was done by males to females
- 5 % was done by females to males
- 4% was done by males to males
- 1 % was done by females to females

### Sexual Harassment As A Legal Issue

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as Amended in 1972:

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a federal agency, enforces sexual harassment guidelines. The EEOC defines sexual harassment as *unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature*. These behaviors constitute sexual harassment when certain criteria are met.

- Criteria I: Submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of employment.
- Criteria II: Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual.
- Criteria III: Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

### How To Stop Unwanted Sexual Attention

If you are receiving unwanted sexual attention, tell the person that such behavior is unwelcome. Or, if you witness sexual harassment behavior between co-workers, you should feel comfortable in calling it to the attention of either/both individual(s) involved. If the person harassing does not take you seriously, the following methods are suggested for stopping the behavior.

Say It Again. Like a broken record, you may have to repeat your objections until the unwelcome behavior stops. Restate your objections: "I understand what you are saying but I don't want you to..." Repeat that statement until the person stops the behavior and takes your request seriously. And, you don't have to explain or justify why you want the person to stop.

Talk To Your Supervisor. If it is your supervisor doing the sexual harassment, talk with his/her supervisor.

Write A Letter to the sexual harasser and include the following:

1. a description of the unwelcome behavior
2. the time the behavior occurred
3. the fact that you want it stopped
4. the warning that if the behavior does not stop, you will take further action
5. your signature and the date

Make a copy and give the letter to the harasser in front of a witness. Contact your organization's human resource personnel or appropriate departmental staff personnel to assist you in informally or formally stopping the unwanted sexual attention.

### **Sexual Harassment Includes Many Things**

- ◆ actual or attempted rape or sexual assault
- ◆ unwanted sexual looks or gestures
- ◆ unwanted sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, questions
- ◆ cat calls
- ◆ turning work discussions to sexual topics
- ◆ asking about sexual fantasies, preferences, history
- ◆ personal questions about social or sexual life
- ◆ touching an employee's clothing, hair, body
- ◆ hanging around a person
- ◆ kissing sounds, howling, smacking lips
- ◆ looking a person up and down (elevator eyes)
- ◆ unwanted deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching
- ◆ referring to an adult as a girl, hunk, doll, babe, or honey
- ◆ telling lies or spreading rumors about a person's personal sex life
- ◆ facial expression, winking, throwing kisses, or licking lips
- ◆ unwanted pressure to sexual favors
- ◆ unwanted pressure for dates
- ◆ whistling at someone
- ◆ sexual comments
- ◆ sexual innuendoes or stories
- ◆ staring at someone
- ◆ neck massage
- ◆ giving personal gifts
- ◆ hugging, kissing, patting, or stroking
- ◆ sexually suggestive visuals
- ◆ standing close or brushing up against a person
- ◆ unwanted letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature
- ◆ sexual comments about a person's clothing, anatomy, or looks
- ◆ touching or rubbing oneself sexually around another person
- ◆ making sexual gestures with hand or through body movement

Sexual harassment is an area about which we are all still learning. Everyone needs to take some ownership and express his/her preferences when confronted with sexual harassment. One way to avoid conflict when engaging in physical contact is to ask verbal or non-verbal permission, such as extending arms. A verbal example would be: "You look like you need a hug. May I give you a hug? Or, I really need a hug today. Will you give me a hug?"

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